

**MINUTES**  
**CALLED MEETING**  
**STEPHENS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**COURTHOUSE ANNEX**  
**MAY 23, 2007**

**PRESENT:** Commissioners Kenneth Peeples, Rex Anderson, and Harold Andrews; County Administrator Darrell Hampton; Finance Director Phyllis Ayers; County Attorney Brian Ranck and Kimberly Ashe Interim Clerk.

Commissioner Peeples called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and welcomed those present.

**I. APPROVE AGENDA**

A motion was made by Commissioner Andrews, seconded by Commissioner Anderson, to approve the agenda as presented.

**Motion carried unanimously.**

**II. NEW BUSINESS**

1. REPRESENTATIVE JEANETTE JAMIESON; MR. PITMAN WITH GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS; AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM PETER BROWN CONSTRUCTION DISCUSSED THE POSSIBLE USE OF INMATE LABOR ON THE JAIL PROJECT

Rep. Jamieson spoke to the group first introducing Mr. Pitman and sharing that Hart County had recently announced their plans to use the Department of Corrections (DOC) on their upcoming construction projects. Ms. Jamieson also stated that she understands the construction process and further understands that a “contract is history” and if the contracts for some portions have been signed it may be too late to use the DOC on those parts of the project. Representative Jamieson stated that there were two things that she would like to discuss.

1. “What parts of the jail project have not been contracted yet?”
2. Representative Jamieson said she wanted to be sure to, “put to ease any concerns that people may have about the use of DOC labor crews. They are truly skilled craftsmen.”

Attorney Brian Ranck asked, “What portions of the project has already been awarded?”

John Stewart of Peter Brown Construction spoke stating his company was not at all opposed to using DOC crews. They have used these crews 3 times previously in Georgia and on 35 projects in Florida. They can save money on labor-intensive projects. Mr. Stewart stated that had Peter Brown been aware of our intent to use inmate labor they

would have selected a different project plan using brick, block and drywall rather than a quick build project. He stated that Peter Brown had accepted bids on all portions of the project and that contracts had already been forwarded to the subcontractors. Several of their subs have already been bonded for the job. Mr. Stewart then posed a few questions of his own to Mr. Pitman of the Department of Corrections.

1. Can the DOC guarantee pricing as Peter Brown is required by contract to do?

Mr. Pitman stated that they have a project manager that handles all purchasing

2. Does the DOC offer a standard one-year warranty on the total project as well as extended warranties which are provided by some manufacturers? This question was not answered.

Mr. Pitman of the DOC spoke again mentioning the fact that on their projects the Corrections Department handles all of the housing, transportation, meals, guarding and so forth of the inmates. They are supervised on site by the contractor or subcontractor.

John Stewart gave an option that they had used before that may work on this project. In this example the subs are given the option of using inmates as basically day laborers. They “check out” an inmate and reimburse the county at a rate of five dollars per hour. “Can this be done in Georgia?” Peter Brown asked. “As it stands now I have divvied this project up and sent out contracts. If we back out now we may face legal action.”

Representative Jeanette Jamieson had questions about the construction of the jail administration that was under consideration of being pulled out of the project. “Is the construction of the administration brick and mortar or self contained?” Jamieson asked.

Mr. Will Sumner of Peter Brown answered that portion was a prefab metal building. Mr. Sumner stated that we were actually a little late to save much, if any money at all by pulling any section out.

Ms. Jamieson thanked the group as a whole and then asked if the Commission would allow Mr. Pitman to address the group again.

Chairman Peebles gave permission.

Mr. Pitman stated that the Department of Corrections has 33 crews and typically handle projects with a value between \$10,000 and \$2,000,000. They complete the project almost entirely on their own. Contractors are used to sign off on electrical and alarm work. He stated, “Everything we do is by code.”

John Stewart asked if Mr. Pitman would recommend trying to get out of the contracts. Mr. Pitman responded that that would depend on the cost to do so. He stated that with inmates work would take more time. He said, “If it would take a contractor 10 months it would take the inmates twelve. The inmates work four ten hour days and are typically on

site for approximately eight hours a day. Use of inmate labor usually produces a savings of between ten and forty percent.” Mr. Pitman said, “Basically when we do a building we are in it from the beginning and there are no subs.”

Phyllis Ayers asked Mr. Pitman, “Is there a waiting list? How long would it be before we could get workers?”

Mr. Pitman replied that that there was about a two-year waiting list.

Jeanette Jamison spoke and stated that she had spoken with the Director of the Department of Correction and was told that, “if we work it out, they will get us a crew.” Representative Jamieson stated again that she wanted to make it clear to everyone that, “I know the quality of work these people do. We aren’t talking about a man with six nails and a hammer, these are professionals. The quality of work is not a question.”

John Stewart then asked the local electrician whom has been awarded this jail project to express his concerns on this issue.

The electrician began by stating, “As a taxpayer in Stephens County I applaud the efforts being made to consider all options in an attempt to save money. However, as a contractor, I don’t think that it is fair that I should be forced to compete against the Department of Corrections. You will NOT save \$3,000,000. I sent a letter to Peter Brown and said that I wanted out of the contract if DOC labor has to be used. I plan my projects out and I have passed up jobs because I got this job. If it doesn’t work out I’m gonna be looking to get some of that money, and money for the other jobs that I gave up back. And what happens with the one year warranty is the DOC gonna honor that?” He also stated that, “somebody has to be responsible for this project. Are they (inmates) going to be held to specifications like all other contractors would be?”

Representative Jeanette Jamieson spoke up and asked if she could explain where the \$3,000,000 number came from. She said, “Using the DOC typically saves thirty five to forty percent on a project. So, on a project the size of the jail even with estimating a smaller saving you could estimate saving three million dollars.” Ms. Jamieson went on to say, “if the project has moved on too far, I understand. Let’s move on. Everyone in the state knows of this program. If you did not, I am sorry.” She followed by asking, “If we are thinking of pulling the administration out of the building to save money, why can’t we explore other options. I apologize to all of you. It appears to me that whomever I spoke with about this matter didn’t know as much as they thought they did. It has become painfully obvious that we came too late in the game.

Attorney Brian Ranck spoke, “If I may let me clarify one point, we do have the discretion to cut back on the project but not change it completely.”

“I understand the process. If the contracts have been signed I do not recommend trying to get out of it,” Representative Jamieson stated.

The electrical contractor voiced his opinion on the location of jail administration. He

stated, "I believe that it should all be together under one roof."

Commissioner Andrews thanked Jeanette Jamieson for sharing with the group and arranging the discussion with the Department of Corrections. Commissioner Andrews said, "When I got the call from you, I thought, why we didn't talk about this last year? Let me also say, that we are looking at not moving some parts of administration to the building to save money. I believe that there are SOME possibilities of savings. If we are to make this work we both have some hills to climb."

Sheriff Gene Sorrells further explained the current set up of jail administration, which uses three locations now.

"We are speaking of seven rooms, in the past Stephens County has always used three locations, it's simply a matter of where you want it. We are talking to Peter Brown about the possible saving and Alan Smith is receiving quotes on getting old hospital equipped like it needs to be." Finance Director Phyllis Ayers summed up.

Commissioner Andrews stated that there would be no square footage savings.

Peter Brown mentioned that we are discussing an area about the size of the meeting room, not a large area. Once you consider re doing the drawing, having the metal quoted again, etc. you will be looking at minimal savings, if any at all.

Finance Director Ayers asked Mr. Stewart and Mr. Sumner to please stop by and look at the notes made on the drawings before they left the building.

Marshall Dan Merck mentioned the possibility of using the DOC on the Courthouse or Airport project.

Representative Jamieson said that could be determined by the wording of SPLOST.

Much discussion on this subject broke out throughout the room. Jack Stovall stood in the audience and stated "there are no contracts signed on the Courthouse. Let's take these guys and get some stuff done."

Commissioner Peeples called the group to order and pointed out that the discussion was drifting completely away from the issues at hand.

Jeanette Jamieson stood and asked to speak once more. "I apologize for wasting everyone's time if there is no way that we can help on the jail project. I would like to publicly thank Mr. Pitman and the Department of Corrections. Let me assure you that they are fine, fine craftsmen and if you haven't already I suggest that you travel to take a look at their work."

Commissioner Andrews spoke stating that he felt that this had been a very productive meeting.

2. ADMINISTRATOR DARRELL HAMPTON READ A PRESS RELEASE  
TO THE MEDIA

The press release stated that in digging water retention ponds at the new jail site lacquer drums were discovered and the Environmental Protection Division had been called in to conduct an investigation. Administrator Hampton requested of the Commission permission to contract any clean up if found necessary.

Commissioner Anderson made the motion to hire a clean up crew if necessary. This motion was seconded by Harold Andrews. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**III. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn was made at 11:55 a.m. by Harold Andrews and seconded by Rex Anderson. **Motion carried unanimously.**

**Approved this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2007.**

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**Kenneth Peeples, Chairman**

**Attest: \_\_\_\_\_**  
**Kimberly Ashe, Interim County Clerk**